

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 078737

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, UG, GW, US

SUBJECT: FRG AMBASSADOR ON DESIRABILITY OF REOPENING
U.S. EMBASSY IN UGANDA

REF: BONN 5995

1. REFTEL, LATEST OF A NUMBER OF MESSAGES FROM AMBASSADOR
ELLERKMANN ARGUING FOR REOPENING THE U.S. EMBASSY IN
KAMPALA, SUGGESTS THAT FRG MAY NOT BE FULLY AWARE OF USG
POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT AND THAT INITIAL EMBASSY BRIEFINGS
OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KLEINER PRESENT TIMELY OPPORTUNITY
TO PROVIDE DETAILED EXPLICATION OF U.S. VIEW. EMBASSY
ACCORDINGLY REQUESTED TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS, AS APPRO-
PRIATE, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH KLEINER ON THIS SUBJECT.

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A. THERE IS NO RPT NO LIKELIHOOD OF EAR-Y U.S. MOVES
TOWARD IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-UGANDAN RELATIONS. NEITHER
U.S. CONGRESS NOR PUBLIC WOULD COMPREHEND SUCH ACTION, AND
EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN ANY EVENT NOT INCLINED TO DO ANYTHING
WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS POSITIVE GESTURE TOWARDS
AMIN AS LONG AS CURRENT SITUATION IN UGANDA WITH RESPECT
TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUES.

B. EVENTS OF LATE-FEBRUARY EARLY-MARCH HAVE HARDLY CREATED FAVORABLE BILATERAL ATMOSPHERE FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, OR PROVIDED ANY INDICATION OF SERIOUS UGANDAN INTEREST IN SUBSTANTIVE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. THIS IS REACTION THAT HAS BEEN INFORMALLY CONVEYED TO ZAIRE GOVERNMENT IN RESPONSE TO AMIN STATEMENT TO ZAIRE AMBASSADOR CITED PARA 3(H) REFTEL, AND WOULD FORM BASIS OF REPLY TO ANY OTHER FEELERS RECEIVED IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

C. WHILE WE COMMISERATE WITH UGANDAN PEOPLE WHO WE REALIZE ARE BEARING BRUNT OF SUFFERING CAUSED BY AMIN REGIME, WE DO NOT AGREE THAT RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. PRESENCE IN KAMPALA (EVEN IF IT WERE POLITICALLY POSSIBLE IN U.S., WHICH IT IS NOT) WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN UGANDA. WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT PRESENCE PER SE OF REMAINING EUROPEAN EMBASSIES IN KAMPALA HAD AMELIORATIVE EFFECT ON RECENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOME CHRISTIAN AND TRIBAL GROUPS, NOR THAT PRESENCE OF WESTERN MISSIONARIES HAD SIMILAR IMPACT. IN FACT, CONTRARY TO IMPLICATION OF PARA 3(B) OF REFTEL, REPORTS RECEIVED HERE SUGGEST THAT VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS DIRECTED AGAINST UGANDANS HAVE PROCEEDED APACE (IF IN SOMEWHAT LESS PUBLIC MANNER) SINCE DEATHS OF LUWUM AND TWO MINISTERS.

D. IT IS CLEAR THAT MANY UGANDANS, IN COUNTRY AS WELL AS IN EXILE, HOPE THAT THE WEST WILL "ASSIST THEM AGAINST
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OPPRESSION," AS NOTED PARA 3(A) REFTEL. MAJOR SPECIFIC HOPE EXPRESSED IN COMMUNICATIONS REACHING US IS FOR ASSISTANCE IN ENGINEERING OVERTHROW OF AMIN REGIME, SOMETHING IN WHICH FOR VARIETY OF SELF-EVTDENT REASONS WE DO NOT INTEND TO INVOLVE OURSELVES. FAILING SUCH "ASSISTANCE," REOPENING OF EMBASSY IN KAMPALA WOULD PROVIDE LITTLE MORE THAN MOMENTARY SOLACE AND/OR RAISING OF HOPES, WHICH WOULD QUICKLY BE DISPELLED BY CONTINUING REALITIES OF UNDERLYING UGANDAN CONDITIONS OF OUR INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEM. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT UGANDANS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH US TO EXPRESS OR RECEIVE MORAL OR OTHER SUPPORT WOULD COME UNDER GREATER DANGER BY SO DOING.

E. ATTEMPTS BY SOVIETS AND OTHER RADICALS TO EXPLOIT UGANDAN SITUATION FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES DO NOT UNDULY CONCERN US. EVEN AMIN APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE ULTERIOR MOTIVES INVOLVED, AND LONG-TERM SUCCESS OF SOVIET STRATEGY

SEEMS FAR FROM ASSURED. TOTAL CYNICISM OF SOVIETS IN CHOICE OF ALLIES IS ALSO NOT LOST ON OTHER AFRICAN STATES. OUR RETURN TO KAMPALA IN ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN UGANDAN POLITICAL/HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS WOULD SIMPLY BLUR THIS DISTINCTION AND LESSEN POLITICAL COSTS TO SOVIETS OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH AMIN. NOR DO WE BELIEVE THAT A POSSIBLE TURNING BY AMIN AWAY FROM SOVIETS IN RESPONSE TO WESTERN OVERTURES WOULD BE OF ANY CRUCIAL IMMEDIATE VALUE OR NECESSARY LONG DURATION. WE DO NOT DOUBT THAT AMIN WOULD LIKE OURSELVES AND BRITISH TO RETURN TO KAMPALA -- HIS PRIDE IS OFFENDED AND HIS TACTICAL OPTIONS ARE REDUCED BY OUR ABSENCE. WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT WE WOULD GAIN ANYTHING WORTHWHILE BY OBLIGING HIM.

2. ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT LIKELIHOOD IS SMALL OF MANY AMERICANS LEAVING UGANDA IN RESPONSE TO OUR RENEWED URGINGS, WE WOULD LIKE TO STRESS TO AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE
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KLEINER OUR SERIOUSNESS IN UNDERTAKING THIS EFFORT AND OUR HOPE THAT FRG EMBASSY WILL PURSUE IT AS DILIGENTLY AS ALLOWED BY THE NEED FOR DISCRETION, AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEMANDS. REGARDING PUBLICITY, WE OBVIOUSLY ARE NOT PUBLICIZING EFFORT UNDERWAY THROUGH FRG EMBASSY TO CONTACT AMERICANS. HOWEVER, IT CLEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT AMCITS CONTACTED BY FRG OR OURSELVES FROM MAKING THIS FACT PUBLIC. WE ALSO NOTED BRITISH PRESS REPORT MENTIONED PARA 1 REFTEL, WHICH APPARENTLY FILED FROM NAIROBI; THIS WAS UNFORTUNATE, AND WE DO NOT KNOW ORIGIN OF STORY, BUT FORTUNATELY IT WAS NOT PICKED UP HERE OR, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, ELSEWHERE. FOR FRG'S INFORMATION, IF QUERIED ON THIS SUBJECT, DEPARTMENT WOULD CONFIRM THAT IT IS OUR STANDING GUIDANCE THAT AMERICANS SHOULD AVOID OR LEAVE UGANDA, BUT WOULD NOT SPECIFY TIMING OR CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH THIS ADVISORY NOTICE HAD MOST RECENTLY BEEN DISSEMINATED.
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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 08-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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